NATO ENLARGEMENT: WHY OR WHY NOT?

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ABSTRACT

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NATO ENLARGEMENT: WHY OR WHY NOT?

Creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a military alliance established by the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949 in Washington, DC. NATO Headquarters is currently located in Brussels, Belgium, and the organization constitutes a system of collective defense whereby its member states agreed that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.[1] If such an armed attack occurs, each member nation may exercise the right of individual or collective self-defense to assist the Party or Parties being attacked. Each member nation may exercise these rights individually and in concert with the other member nations in order to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

NATO has its origins from the Treaty of Brussels which was signed on March 17, 1948 by Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France and the United Kingdom.   The Treaty of Brussels and the Soviet blockade of Berlin led to the creation of the Western European Union (WEU) defense organization. This organization was not deemed strong enough to protect itself against the Soviet Union. The European powers thought participation of the United States was necessary in order to counter the military power of the USSR, and therefore talks for a new military alliance began.   These talks resulted in a newly created NATO which included the five Treaty of Brussels states and Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Iceland and the United States. Article 10 of the Treaty provides that:

> The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute

to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession.[2]

The North Atlantic Treaty entered into force in 1949 when each signatory nation completed the ratification in accordance with the provisions of their respective constitutional processes.

The principles of the NATO alliance are "determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area."[3] NATO was largely set up to discourage an attack by the Soviet Union on the non-Communist nations of Western Europe.   After World War II ended in 1945, an intense rivalry developed between the Communist nations, led by the Soviet Union, and non-Communist nations, led by the United States. This rivalry became known as the Cold War.

NATO Accessions Round One

It is important that we briefly look at each round of accessions and the state of the nations requesting accession into NATO. In 1945, Turkey stood isolated and vulnerable, having alienated the victorious allies (Britain, US) by wartime neutrality (despite treaty obligations to Britain) and by conducting wartime trade with Nazi Germany. Turkey sent government envoys to Berlin, when the defeat of the Soviet Union appeared likely, in the hopes of carving out a state in the Caucasus. After the war and the defeat of the Germans, Moscow's resolve to punish Turkey and relieve them from their position as guardians of the Straits was strengthened. Turkey was able

to win over western powers with its critical strategic location for Western Europe and the free world. By 1947 the British and the Americans were treating Turkey as a key element in their emerging strategy to block the further expansion of Soviet power. Turkey's 1952 unconditional entry into NATO represented a victory for the persistence of the Turkey. Turkey vaulted onto the international stage as a valued member of the Atlantic alliance.

Greece's path to NATO accession is one of repaying a civil war support debt and determining a means to defend itself despite its strategically weak and porous northern border. After World War II the Greek leadership was in exile and the country was in the midst of a civil war. The civil war opponent supported was by the communist Soviets. Greece lacked the strategic depth needed to defend itself from an attack on its porous northern border. The overall superiority of the Soviet Bloc and the local superiority of the Bulgarian and Yugoslav forces meant that there was not enough space (land) for Greece to plan a defense strategy that did not have their military being chased into the Aegean Sea. The United States and Britain provide internal security to Greece thus allowing the defeat of the communist backed opposition during the civil war. Washington saw Greece and Turkey as useful and mutually reinforcing outposts against Soviet Bloc aggression which threatened both countries. In 1950, NATO invited Greece and Turkey to become "associated" powers. In 1951 the North Atlantic Council (NAC) approved the accession of Greece and Turkey and they both were admitted as full members of NATO in 1952.

The accession of Turkey and Greece to the NATO Treaty marked the completion of round one of accessions. The commencement of the actions that led to the first

round of accessions pre-dates the NATO Treaty itself. Turkey as a member of the alliance would have been unlikely at the end of World War II because of its neutrality stance during the war. Greece had many problems coming out of the war and needed the support of the western powers to maintain its sovereignty. It was clearly evident to Alliance members that Greece and Turkey were imperative to blocking the spread of communism and the growth of the Soviet Bloc.

NATO Accessions Round Two

The climate of post World War II Germany from 1945 until 1955 parallels political, military and social economics of NATO nations as they tried to recover from World War II. "The Potsdam accords established three Allied Occupation Zones, under which the former German Reich was to be administered."[4] The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) was created from the post-Word War II United States, British and French occupation zones. A fourth zone was occupied by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union maintained a very large army in its zone to intimidate and suppress the German people. Creating West Germany as an independent country was seen as offensive by the Soviet Union considering their immense loss of life at the hand of Nazi Germany during World War II.   To allow the re-birth of a German-nation was seen as a great threat to Soviet security. The French often aligned their governing of their sector with the Soviets because they also did not want to see the rebirth of a powerful Germany. West Germany didn't become fully sovereign until May 5, 1955[5]. The United States was the lead proponent to rebuilding a strong West Germany. This included rearming West Germany which was reluctantly agreed to by France, which asked the United States to commit additional forces to assist in the protection of Europe. The Korean War was

starting in Asia and the Cold War was heating up in Europe. This once again gave the Unites States a dual focus. West Germany's ability to provide NATO with much needed additional forces to blunt a Soviet attack was required by the alliance. NATO as a whole changed its strategy for defeating the communist nations of the east should the communist attempt to attack Western Europe. NATO with the additional capabilities of new member West Germany decided to fight and defend east of the Rhine River. This strategy would remain throughout the Cold War.

There was also resistance from other contemporary leading figures such as the first NATO Secretary General Lord Ismay, who it is believed, unofficially declared that the objective of NATO is to "keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down." Shortly after the official entry of West Germany into NATO in 1955, the Soviet Union and Communist nations of Eastern Europe formed their own military alliance to oppose the newly established NATO. This Soviet-led alliance was called the Warsaw Pact. NATO's completion of round two of accessions was completed with the same theme as the previous. This time instead of shoring up the southern flank from communism and the Soviet Bloc, West Germany shored up the eastern flank and once again increased the pool of military capability available to NATO.

NATO Accessions Round Three

Round three of NATO accessions would take place almost twenty-seven years after West Germany became a member. The current member nations of NATO were very much in agreement and looked forward to the accession of Spain. The accession of Spain in 1982 was not without controversy. The controversy this time was within the Spanish government. The current ruling party (Union de Centro Democratico (UDC)

was content to join NATO while the opposing socialist party (Partido Socialista Espanol Obrero (PSOE)) viewed Spanish membership in NATO as a loss of sovereignty.[6] Spain's significant geographical position, provided some of the world's major sea, air, and land communication routes and made it a valuable potential partner for the alliance. Spanish supporters of NATO membership agreed that being a member of the alliance would protect these same geographical assets. They also maintained that integration into NATO would assist sorely needed modernization of Spain's armed services in addition to the securing of adequate national defense. Another important reason Spain was choosing NATO accession at this time was because it believed NATO accession would also help the country to be welcomed into the European Economic Community (EC) (today's European Union (EU)). Popular and official opinion had been virtually unanimous in favoring Spain's accession to the EC; considerable doubts were expressed with regard to Spanish membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).[7]

Some political forces in Spain, particularly the socialists and the communists, did not agree that full membership would benefit the country's defense and foreign policy aims. On the contrary, they felt it would raise the level of tension between the rival power blocs and would make Spain a more likely target in any future conflict with the Soviet Union.[8] They also maintained that NATO would be of no benefit to Spain in the country's long-standing effort to recover Gibraltar, because it could be assumed that other NATO members would support Britain on this issue. Resentment of the United States as the principal supporter of the now deposed Franco regime was another factor influencing those who opposed Spain's entry into NATO.

During the third round of accessions, NATO's posture did not necessitate shoring up a flank. Spain's geographical location did provide the alliance with key ports and bases for air, ground and sea lines of communication during a protracted conflict with the communist and Soviet Bloc nations of the Warsaw Pact. The alliance would provide Spain with resources, equipment, structure and knowledge to overhaul a military and defense strategy in dire need of transformation. This round of accessions would be the last one during the Cold War.

Berlin Wall Falls Iron Curtain is Raised

Throughout the 1980s, the Soviet Union found itself fighting a frustrating war against Afghanistan. At the same time, the Soviet economy faced the continuously escalating costs of the arms race against the United States and its NATO Allies. Dissent in the Soviet homeland was growing while the economy was stagnating and the iron fisted communist control was faltering under the combined burden. The communist regime of the Soviet Union found itself unwilling to rebuff challenges to its control in Eastern Europe. In late 1989 the Berlin Wall came down. Borders were opened throughout former Warsaw Pact countries and free elections ousted many communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe. In late 1991 the Soviet Union dissolved its control of the republics for an open Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Iron Curtain was lifted and the Cold War over.

The lifting of the Iron Curtain and end of the Warsaw Pact reestablished independent nations throughout Eastern Europe. Many of these nations welcomed and cherished their new independence while also desiring to establish new relations with the countries of the NATO Alliance. Allied leaders responded at their summit meeting in

London, in July 1990, by extending a "hand of friendship" across the old East-West

divide and proposing a new cooperative relationship with all the countries of Central and

Eastern Europe. Following the North Atlantic Council Meeting in Ministerial Session in

Copenhagen on 6-7 June 1991 this communiqué was issued:

> The long decades of European division are over. We welcome the major increase in the contacts by the Alliance and its members with the Soviet Union and the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as they accept the hand of friendship extended by Alliance Heads of States and Government in London last year. We welcome the progress made by the peoples of these countries towards political and economic reform. We seek to build constructive partnerships with them in order further to promote security and stability in a free and undivided Europe which will recognise the political, economic, social and ecological elements of security, along with the indispensable defence dimension.[9]

The official title to be given to nations desiring open relationships with NATO is "Partner"

or "Partnership Nation" The scene was set for the establishment in December 1991 of

the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), a forum to bring together NATO and its

new Partner countries to discuss issues of common concern.[10] NATO's charter allows

that, "The Parties (member nations) may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other

European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to

the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty."[11] This leaves NATO

Alliance membership open to all of Europe to include the former Warsaw PACT Nations.

The Soviet Union Has Crumbled, Reasons to Enlarge NATO

European security was the basis for European unity, and NATO served as the

guarantor of this security and the cornerstone for unification of a European continent of

democratic nations. NATO expansion up to this point has been based on mutual

improvements of security of the alliance and the aspiring partner. The NATO Charter

itself requires member nations and aspirants to contribute toward the further

development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability.[12]   NATO leadership and enlargement was required to increase European unity on the continent and the North Atlantic area. The reasons for European unity and NATO enlargement are as follows:

- To encourage and support democratic reforms, especially civilian and democratic control over the military.

- To strengthen and broaden the trans-Atlantic ties.

- To strengthen the Alliance's effectiveness and cohesion, and preserve the Alliance's political and military capability to perform its core functions of common defense as well as peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.

- To reinforce the values toward integration and cooperation in Europe based on shared democratic values, thereby curbing the tendency of armed or political strife along ethnic or territorial lines.

- To extend to new members the benefits of common defense and increased openness in defense planning and military budgets, thereby decreasing the likelihood of internal instability.

<u>Criteria for Expansion</u>

The NATO 1995 Enlargement Study developed a specific list of criteria that aspirants are required to meet prior to consideration of NATO membership:

- A functioning democratic political system (including free and fair elections and respect for individual liberty and the rule of law) and a market economy.

- Democratic –civil military relations.

- Treatment of minority populations in accordance with Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) guidelines.

- Resolution of disputes with neighboring countries and a commitment to solving international disputes peacefully.

- A military contribution to the alliance and a willingness to take steps to achieve interoperability with alliance members.[13]

Despite NATO's foundation of collective defense, it is interesting to note that only the last criteria focuses on a military capability, reflecting an emphasis on long-term security, and the need for aspiring nations to focus their efforts on political, economic and military reforms.[14] This condition only established the preconditions for considerations, but in no way guarantees that if a candidate meets all of the criteria it will be offered membership. These criteria did, however, narrow the field of eligible candidates. The ultimate decision is a political consensus building process based on strategic considerations or alliance bargaining, with the major NATO members (United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France) having a greater political voice than the other members.

> Though not stated as specific criteria, there exist four basic conditions for the overall enlargement process that should be kept in mind: (1) additional members should be judged by the degree to which they enhance the Alliance's political-military potential; (2) only qualified candidates who truly desire and are ready for membership should be considered; (3) no qualified European state can be excluded by Moscow's unilateral "red line", a term referring to the supposed sphere of influence by Russia under the previous Soviet regime; (4) there are no other linkages or cluster of states that have to be admitted together.[15]

Recognizing the possible complexities associated with accession into NATO, programs have been developed to assist aspiring countries in their preparation for possible membership. The initial program is called the Partnership for Peace (PfP). The PfP program contributes to political and military stability. The program familiarizes the countries with the Alliance's structures and procedures and deepens their understanding of the obligations and rights that membership will entail.

> Partnership for Peace (PfP) is a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) program aimed at creating trust between NATO and other states in Europe and the former Soviet Union; 23 nations are members. It was first proposed as an American initiative at the meeting of NATO defense ministers in Travemünde, Germany, on 20–21 October 1993, and formally launched on 10-11 January 1994 NATO summit in Brussels, Belgium.

NATO Accessions Round Four

NATO Heads of State and Government convened for the Madrid Summit in July of 1997 with the complicated task to determine which, if any, of twelve European nations they should issue an invitation to join the alliance. Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia were all aspirants for this round of enlargement. These former Warsaw Pact nations are geographically located to the northeast, east and southeast of the alliance's European land mass. Reforms in the areas of social politics, economics and military control and capability were required before these nations would be accepted into NATO by current partners.

NATO members emerged from the summit having issued invitations to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to begin accession negotiations.[16] These nations were chosen for accession based on their reform progress in the areas of social politics, economics and military control. These nations were deemed by NATO member nations

as being ready to contribute to the alliance in accordance with the principles laid out in the NATO Treaty.[17] This round of accessions was not based on a requirement to shore up a flank or requirement for additional forces to prevent or counter Soviet/Russian aggression. This round of NATO accessions was based on the principles found in the NATO Treaty signed in Washington on April 4, 1949.

Madrid Summit Sets Stage for Future Accessions

The September 1995 NATO Enlargement Study set guidelines and criteria for aspiring nations. The key elements of these guidelines and criteria were a democratic political system, a market based economy, enforcement of humane treatment of the minority population, resolved territory disputes with neighbors and the ability to make an interoperable military contribution to the alliance. Fact finding and assistance teams from the alliance had travelled to all aspiring nations. The reports from these teams were sent to the capitals of member nations for review. The nations of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovenia were deemed as most compliant with the guidelines and criteria. The United States let it be publicly known that the Washington administration considered the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland as best qualified for the first round of enlargements after the Cold War. Some NATO allies believed the United States was trying to dictate the outcome of the Madrid Summit. The Washington administration was considering the ratification process internal to the United States.

The NATO process for ratifying accessions to the treaty states: "this treaty shall be ratified and it provisions carried out by Parties in accordance with their respective constitutional processes."[18] "In 1949 the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

commented specifically on the Senate's role with respect to the admission of new members to NATO."[19]

> Inasmuch as the admission of new member might radically alter our obligations under the pact, the committee examined article 10 very carefully. The question arose whether any United States decision respecting new members would be based solely on Presidential action or would require Senate approval. Consequently the committee was fully satisfied by the commitment of the President, delivered by the Secretary of State, that he would consider the admission of a new member to the pact as the conclusion of a new treaty with that member and would ask the advice and consent of the senate to each such admission. The committee considers this an obligation binding upon the Presidential office.[20]

To date all instruments of NATO accessions have been presented by the President to the Senate for advice and consent although there is no formal U.S. statute or code requiring the President to consult with Congress. The Clinton Administration in Washington saw NATO enlargement as a key factor to future European Security. The administration also knew this would be costly to the US and the NATO Alliance. The U.S. chose to lead and support NATO Enlargement but wanted to do to do so at a pace that the US Senate would support.

Other Outcomes of the Madrid Summit Concerning NATO Enlargement

NATO was prepared for the sensitive issue of how to maintain interest of nations who aspired to join the alliance but were not invited at the Madrid Summit. NATO assured the aspirants that enlargement was a continuing process and as current members of NATO Partnership for Peace program they encouraged them to actively participate in the new Euro Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) which was developed by NATO Foreign Ministers in May of 1997. The EAPC meets regularly at NATO Headquarters and would be included as part of future meetings of NATO Defense Ministers, NATO Foreign Ministers and at NATO summits.

The Madrid Summit declared a new NATO. Evidence to this new NATO was the creations of two new councils. These councils were founded to take note of the special relationships NATO shares with Ukraine and Russia. The NATO Ukraine Council and the NATO Russia Council provides a forum to discuss European security on a regular basis at NATO Headquarters and during future meetings of NATO Defense Ministers, NATO Foreign Ministers and at NATO summits.

NATO Membership Action Plan

The Membership Action Plan provides for concrete feedback and advice from NATO to aspiring countries on their own preparations directed at achieving future membership. It provides for a range of activities designed to strengthen each aspirant country's candidacy. The MAP does not replace the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. The aspirants' participation in PfP and its Planning and Review Process (PARP) has been tailored to their needs. Full participation in PfP/PARP is essential because it allows aspirant countries to develop interoperability with NATO forces and to prepare their force structures and capabilities for possible future membership. All candidates must participate in MAP.

> The Membership Action Plan (MAP) was launched in April 1999 to assist those countries desiring to join the Alliance in their preparations by providing advice, assistance and practical support on all aspects of NATO membership. Its main features are:
>
> - the submission by aspiring members of individual annual national programmes on their preparations for possible future membership, covering political, economic, defence, resource, security and legal aspects;
>
> - a focused and candid feedback mechanism on aspirant countries' progress on their programmes that includes both political and technical advice, as well as annual 19+1 meetings at Council level to assess progress;

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- a clearing-house to help coordinate assistance by NATO and by member states to aspirant countries in the defence/military field;

- a defence planning approach for aspirants which includes elaboration and review of agreed planning targets.[21]

In 1999 the NATO Alliance believed that the inclusion of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland would serve the overall political and strategic interests of the NATO Alliance. The entrance into NATO of three former Warsaw Pact nations and the creation of the Membership Action Plan maintained the desire of the aspiring nations to continue reforms and seeking entrance into NATO. The Alliance committed to extend further invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership.[22]

NATO Accessions Round Five

The Prague Summit in November 2002 is known as the "Transformation Summit". This summit marked NATO's change from a military alliance manned and equipped for conflict against the Soviet Union to a more flexible alliance with new capabilities for new threats.[23] The alliance viewed enlargement as a secondary issue for the summit. At Prague, NATO issued accession invitations for membership to Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.[24]

This round of accessions was just like round four, NATO did not need to "shore up" or seal a flank or fill any other military requirement. These entries were requested and granted based on their desire to be a member of the alliance. NATO's accepted these nations based on new member nations' desires for democracy and the NATO Charter's open door policy to European nations willing to further the principles of the NATO Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.[25] However, it

should be noted that NATO offered accession to three former Soviet Republics that have direct borders with the Russia or Belarus. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are small nations that provide additional risk to the NATO alliance when considering the NATO Treaty Article V treaty that states an armed attack against one or more of NATO members shall be considered an attack against them all.

The road these nations traveled to NATO membership was more structured and closely watched by Europe and the rest of the world. Each candidate had pursued their individual MAP program since 1999. Individual MAP programs were designed by each nation with assistance from a NATO Accession team. Each nation's MAP was reviewed on an individual basis with yearly published reports to the NATO Defense and Foreign Ministers conferences. [26]

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were viewed as the nations which made the most progress in reforms across the board. Slovakia made outstanding improvements in political and military reform. Slovenia had great success in economic and political reforms but public support for NATO membership had declined. Bulgaria was resource challenged but did well with military reform but also had some troubles with political corruption. Romania was the most challenged of the seven new members. The Bucharest government had been successful in military reforms and providing over flight rights to support the conflict in Afghanistan but was set-back by corruption in government and border control. The close monitoring and assistance of the MAP program supported each nation in obtaining a NATO Accession invitation.[27]

NATO Accession Round Six

During the April 2008 NATO Summit meeting in Bucharest, Romania, NATO discussed the candidacies of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia for entry into the alliance. The Heads of State and Government also discussed the request by Georgia and Ukraine to be placed in NATO's Membership Action Plan, a significant step on the road to formal candidacy.

Invitations were extended to Albania and Croatia to begin accession negotiations. A dispute with Greece over Macedonia's name could not be resolved between the two countries, and Athens blocked Macedonia's application to begin accession negotiations. Greece contends that Macedonia's name represents a claim against Greek territory. Greece has a northeastern province that is named Macedonia. The country of Macedonia counters by noting they should have the right to name their own country. Macedonia has also amended its constitution to renounce all territorial claims against Greece. Member Foreign Ministers have been given the authority to issue an invitation to Macedonia to begin accession talks should a resolution with Greece be obtained.[28]   Just as in NATO Accessions rounds five and six; Albania, Croatia and Macedonia were accepted based on their desires for democracy and the NATO Charter's open door policy to European nations willing to further the principles of the NATO Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.[29]

MAP Status for Georgia and Ukraine?

During the lead-up to the April Summit in Bucharest the Government of the United States of America advocated Ukraine and Georgia for immediate MAP status. Germany and France with support from Italy, Hungary, Belgium, Netherlands and

Luxemburg blocked the US proposal for MAP for Georgia and Ukraine and instead agreed to a bold statement that these countries would become members of NATO. The statement did not specify when they would become members of NATO. The governments of France and Germany clearly opined that these nations were not ready for MAP, and accession into NATO at this time was premature and should proceed slowly.[30] The United States was of the opinion the French and German positions were based solely on a desire not to antagonize Russia. Representatives of several allied governments criticized the United States handling of the MAP issue. They noted that several allies had clearly indicated before the summit their opposition to Ukraine and Georgia joining the MAP.[31]

Russia, for the most part, has sat by quietly with no overt objections until NATO, with strong United States influence, contemplated moving Georgia and Ukraine forward to a critical phase of the accession process called Membership Action Plan (MAP). Previous new members of NATO have been offered membership within 2-3 years of being placed into the Membership Action Plan. "Membership in the MAP process has recently proved the penultimate step in joining the NATO alliance."[32] Russian leadership regards Georgia and Ukraine as former Soviet space where Russia has strategic interest that they must defend.

European opposition to granting MAP status to Georgia and Ukraine went far beyond not wanting to get on the bad side of Russia. French foreign minister, Francois Fillon, told France Inter Radio, "We are opposed to Georgia and Ukraine's entry because we think that it is not the correct response to the balance of power in Europe, and between Europe and Russia." [33] French Defense Minister Herve Morin said France

also believes Moscow must be consulted before any further expansion of the alliance, which the former Soviet states of Georgia and Ukraine have been looking to join. "These are things that cannot be decided without speaking to our Russian neighbor," Morin said. "(Europe's) security architecture must be built with Russia."[34] France and Germany argue that NATO cannot envisage membership for a country (Georgia) with "frozen conflicts" (South Ossetia and Abkhazia) on its territory. Nor should NATO access Ukraine which has a public that does not support the government's ambition of joining NATO. Such a move would go against alliance rules that state taking a country into NATO should enhance regional stability, not jeopardize it.[35] The next time MAP for Georgia and Ukraine was to be discussed by NATO was set for the NATO Council of Foreign Ministers in early December 2008.

Trouble between Russia and the NATO Aspirants, Georgia and Ukraine

In early August of 2008 Georgian pro-Western President Mikhail Saakashvili ordered a military operation to bring one of its two break away republics back under control of the Georgian government. Russia had previously given many former Soviet citizens in South Ossetia Russian passports. Russia invaded Georgia under the auspices of providing protection to its Russian Citizens in South Ossetia. Russia then officially recognized the breakaway republics as independent nations. It is believed that Russia conducted this short military operation to punish the pro western government and citizens of Georgia because of their desire to join NATO and bring NATO to the southwestern border of Russia. This short conflict resulted in NATO denouncing Russia's invasion and suspending participation in the NATO-Russia Council at NATO headquarters. This council was the major tool for dialog between NATO and Russia. A

commission to support Georgia by providing advice on military, social, political and government areas of concern has been established as a result of the Russian aggression in South Ossetia. The Ukraine supported Georgia by requesting Russian forces in Ukraine and ships assigned to the Black sea port of Sevastapol provide Ukraine with a movement plan 72 hours prior to unit and ship movements

In early January 2009 Russia started a finger pointing session with Ukraine over gas prices and delivery through the pipeline that transits Ukraine and supports Europe. Russia accuse Ukraine of not paying for gas previously delivered and for siphoning off gas en-route to Europe. Russia raised the price of gas for Ukraine and the rest of Europe while not discussing an increase in transit fees payable to the Ukraine from Russia.

Georgia, a Country with an Unresolved Territory Dispute

The conflict between Russia and Georgia goes well beyond the separatist republic of South Ossetia. Russia wants to reestablish a sphere of influence along its borders. Georgia has two regions that have been under control of separatist forces since 1993. Georgia has not exercised direct control over these republics since 2004. The international community with the exception of Russia recognizes South Ossetia and Abkhazia as part of Georgia.

> There are two ethnic groups that claim portions of what are now the Republic of Georgia, the Ossetians and the Abkhazians. When the Soviets annexed Georgia after the Russian Revolution, they created autonomous regions in Georgia for each of these groups, and those are the regions that are in dispute today. The two ethnic regions — South Ossetia in eastern Georgia, and Abkhazia, on its western Black Sea coast — have been essentially independent since the last round of fighting in 2004. They've had Russian financial support and military backing in the form of Russian troops who were part of a regional peacekeeping mission.

Russia has issued passports to most Abkhazians and Ossetians, so it can say that it is intervening on behalf of its own citizens.[36]

NATO suspended meetings of the NATO-Russia Council and created a commission (NATO-Georgia Commission) to support Georgian reforms and to assist Georgia in the recovery from the devastation caused by Russian forces during the Russian aggression into South Ossetia. These measures are intended to assess the damage caused by the military action and to help restore critical services necessary for normal public life and economic activity. Georgia's recovery, security and stability are important to the Alliance.

Ukraine: NATO Membership or Peace with Russia

Even within Ukraine, the NATO Accession idea is not widely supported. Surveys have found that the majority of Ukrainians oppose NATO membership. In fact, in the Russian-speaking east and south of the country, an overwhelming majority are against it. On 1 April 2008, prior to the beginning of NATO's Bucharest Summit, thousands marched on the United States Embassy in Kiev, Ukraine to protest against any proposed offer from the NATO alliance that would lead to Ukraine becoming a member of NATO. More rallies were promised if the NATO granted Ukraine any type of relationship that would result in full NATO membership for Ukraine. Opinion polls conducted in Ukraine over the last 15 years show that more than half of its population is against joining the NATO alliance. In Ukraine, a survey published in February 2009 showed 70 percent opposed their country joining NATO; only 11 percent actually supported NATO membership. The Ukrainian government has launched several information campaigns to inform the populace of the good in joining the NATO Alliance.

These campaigns have not helped the government. Despite these circumstances,

Ukraine's government continues to push for membership.

> Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko pointed to the economic
> benefits of co-operation and promised Ukrainians a referendum on the
> issue. "Politicians will not decide for the people of Ukraine. No one will
> take us there by force. At this stage of our relations, we are talking only
> about enhancing co-operation. Russia's cooperating with NATO as well. I
> don't see anything to worry about now," she said.

Then Russian President, Vladimir Putin, had publicly commented that admission of

Ukraine into the alliance would put Russia's security at risk and that "one can't

theoretically exclude the possibility that Russia will have to point its warheads at

Ukrainian territory". This carefully worded strategic communication "threat" received

great dissemination in the Ukrainian media.

Georgia and Ukraine Membership in NATO as viewed by Russia

Russia viewed the Georgian Rose Revolution and the Ukrainian Orange

Revolution as these nations turning their back on Russia and aligning themselves with

the west. Russia has been dissatisfied with Ukraine's zealous efforts to join NATO and

Ukrainian support for Georgia in the Russia-Georgia conflict in August of 2008. Russia

did not approve of Ukraine's passive attitude toward Russia's Black Sea Fleet. The

Russian leadership is not willing to sit by quietly as two former Soviet countries on the

Russian southwestern flank become members of NATO and significantly reduce

Russian influence in the Black Sea region. The Russian elite and powerbrokers

consider NATO Enlargement of Georgia and Ukraine as a direct security threat and an

insult to Russia. The United States does not view the accession of Georgia and

Ukraine as a threat to Russia but more so as a spreading of democracy that will bring

additional stability to the European continent. "Moscow, though, sees the move as yet another step by the West to encircle Russia and has protested loudly against the plans.

Russian citizens are disturbed at the loss of their Soviet-era buffer zone of republics and former Eastern bloc allies. Georgia has been a particular irritant, especially after the Rose Revolution brought pro-Western President Mikhail Saakashvili to power in 2004. Moscow has strongly opposed Georgia's efforts to become part of NATO, seeing the alliance as a potentially unfriendly military presence on Russia's border. Georgia could become the eastern anchor of a chain of NATO allies that stretches from Poland to Turkey[37].

Ukraine shares some of Georgia's vulnerabilities as well. The Ukrainian region of Crimea has a majority Russian-speaking population. Some of its members would like to join Russia. The peninsula also hosts an important naval base that Russia does not want to relinquish. Many of Russia's military weapons are produced in factories in the Ukraine. The Kremlin might be able to instigate a pro-Russian uprising in the Crimea in which the insurgents, following the South Ossetian precedent, would appeal for Russian military intervention to protect them from Kiev. If Ukraine succeeds in joining NATO or attempts to expel the Russian Black Sea Fleet from Sevastopol, then Russia might annex the Crimea. Following the Bucharest summit, Putin told a news conference that, "The appearance on our borders of a powerful military bloc such as NATO will be considered by Russia as a direct threat to our country's security." Army General Yury Baluyevsky, chief of the Russian General Staff, said that the entry of Ukraine or Georgia into NATO would lead Moscow to "undoubtedly take measures to ensure its security near the state border.

<u>Georgia and Ukraine Membership in NATO as Viewed by European Nations</u>

When the United States pushed this year for the launching of the MAP process to include Ukraine and Georgia in NATO, they met strong opposition not only from France and Germany but from the United Kingdom, Spain, and Italy as well.[38] Strong support for MAP status for Georgia and Ukraine could only be found in four of the eastern European states – Poland, and the three Baltic states. The other eastern European states were reticent as well.[39] Belgium could veto any moves to allow Georgia to become a member of NATO. The country's senior lawmaker Josi Dubier says he will push to make this a government policy. Following a fact-finding trip to South Ossetia, Dubier said Georgia should not become a member of the alliance due to its belligerent and aggressive policies.[40] Membership would bring forth NATO Article V "protection" to Georgia and Ukraine.

> The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.[41]

NATO offering this type of "protection" to Georgia and Ukraine sitting on Russia's borders is considered a serious threat to Russia. Current NATO member countries are very cautious about offering this level of "protection" for fear that inaction upon an Article V violation would seriously weaken or destroy the NATO Alliance. The general public of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom want a peaceful Europe where Russia is an economic partner. These publics have no desire to support NATO Membership for Georgia and Ukraine at the expense of upsetting Russia and possibly

starting another Cold War. Germany and France have stated in the press that Georgia

and Ukraine are not ready for MAP and will block the start of the MAP process.

> German Chancellor Angela Merkel went to St. Petersburg last week (December 17, 2008) for meetings with Russian President Dmitri Medvedev. The central question on the table was Germany's position on NATO expansion, particularly with regard to Ukraine and Georgia. Merkel made it clear at a joint press conference that Germany would oppose NATO membership for both of these countries, and that it would even oppose placing the countries on the path to membership. Since NATO operates on the basis of consensus, any member nation can effectively block any candidate from NATO membership. In one sense, Merkel's reasons for her stance are simple. Germany is heavily dependent on Russian natural gas. If the supply were cut off, Germany's situation would be desperate — or at least close enough that the distinction would be academic. Russia might decide it could not afford to cut off natural gas exports, but Merkel is dealing with a fundamental German interest, and risking that for Ukrainian or Georgian.[42]

Georgia and Ukraine Membership in NATO as Viewed by the United States

Former President George W. Bush's position going into the NATO Summit of

April 2008 was – "that Ukraine and Georgia should be welcomed into a Membership

Action Plan, or MAP that prepares nations for NATO membership."[43] President Bush's

National Security Strategy states the desire to spread democracy wherever possible.

President Bush's position on Georgia and Ukraine was opposed by Germany and

France from within the alliance.

President Bush said, "As tyrannies give way, we (US) must help newly free

nations build effective democracies." [44] Helping Georgia and Ukraine form democratic

governments will help provide a secure and stable environment throughout post-Cold

War Europe.   This is a vital interest of the United States. President Bush went on to

state, "NATO must remain the core security organization of the evolving Euro-Atlantic

architecture in which all countries enjoy the same freedom, cooperation and security."[45]

The US government believes, it is the responsibility of NATO to embrace its neighbors throughout Europe in the interest of maintaining peace and security. Membership in NATO aligns Euro-Atlantic nations along the same democratic political, economic, social, and military related goals.

The U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, prior to the December 2008 meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in Brussels softened the U.S. position on bringing Georgia and Ukraine into NATO.

> We do have the NATO-Georgia and NATO-Ukraine Commissions. Intensifying our work with them, intensifying our contacts with them ,is, we believe, a good alternative and will send a very strong signal that these countries are not ready for membership and still have many, many standards they would have to meet, that we will remain true to the Bucharest Declaration that they will at some point in the future be members of NATO, Rice said.[46]

Conclusion: NATO Accession the Way Ahead

NATO has more than doubled its size in sixty years of existence. There is room for additional accessions as long as there are European countries that are not NATO members. This does not mean that every country in Europe should be in NATO. Articles 2 and 10 of the NATO Washington Treaty clearly state that every European country should have that right to join as long they are:

> …willing to contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.[47]

NATO considers enlargement as a "unique opportunity to build an improved security architecture in the whole of the Euro-Atlantic area."[48] When (a) possible

accession(s) has just the opposite effect, as is the case, when considering accessing Georgia and Ukraine at this time, prudent care and thought must be exercised. Timing is a key element in determining when a nation should be accessed into NATO. Georgia and Ukraine have been told by NATO they will become members of NATO at the Bucharest Summit. A date or deadline for their accession was not given. The two countries have distinctive working relationships with NATO in the NATO-Georgia Commission and the NATO-Ukraine Council. These relations should continue until such a time that they can be welcomed into NATO without creating regional instability.

NATO is a unique opportunity but not the only opportunity to build and improve security throughout Europe. The Organization of Security and CO-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the largest regional security organization in the world.

> The OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. It has 19 missions or field operations in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.[49]

Georgia, Ukraine and all NATO nations are currently members of this organization. OSCE is a forum that can be used to provide security cooperation without the "threatening" collective defense that NATO provides. The OSCE does not take bold political stances during conflicts. The OSCE usually supports statements and resolutions made at the United Nations. OSCE does not carry the same prestige as NATO but is well suited for post Cold War Eastern Europe nations to bring their issues to an international security organization.

The European Union (EU) is an economic and political union of 27 member states, located primarily in Europe. Georgia and Ukraine are currently seeking membership in the European Union as well as NATO. NATO membership is often

thought of as a precursor to European Union membership but there is no rule that one

must come before the other. Turkey is a long time member of NATO and a current EU

aspirant. Considering the current political environment Georgia and Ukraine should

seek EU membership aggressively while maintaining open dialogue and current limited

participation with NATO.

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